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## Continuing Latin Notes

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## MORE ABOUT VOCABULARY BURDEN

By W. L. CARR.

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In an article in the *Classical Journal* for February, 1934, I made the statement that, all other things being equal (which of course they never are), the reading difficulty of a passage in Latin or in any other language can be quite accurately measured by its vocabulary burden: that is, by the proportion of *unfamiliar* words to the running words in the passage. I went on to say that at an early stage in an individual's experiences in reading any given foreign language the vocabulary *burden* of a passage would correspond very closely to the vocabulary *density*; that is, to the proportion of *different* words to the running words in the passage.

Let me illustrate the meaning of the terms *vocabulary density* and *vocabulary burden*. Suppose a passage contains 1000 running words, but only 200 different words; the vocabulary density would be stated as 1:5. Suppose further that of the 200 different words 100 are familiar to the reader and 100 are unfamiliar. The vocabulary burden would be stated as 1:10. That is to say, one word in ten on the average would be unfamiliar to the reader and he would, therefore, have to arrive at the meaning of each of those unfamiliar words either by guesswork or by consulting an animate or inanimate dictionary.

I realize, of course, that words which might be classed as "unfamiliar" would differ widely in the degree of their unfamiliarity, and that for a given reader there would be a wide variation in the difficulty of the solution which even an absolutely unfamiliar word might present. Every informed person knows that a reader's ability to solve the meaning of a large proportion of the English words which a high school or college student will encounter for the first time is increased in direct proportion to the number of related Latin words he knows, especially if he has been given some training in the practical art of etymologizing. What we sometimes forget is that the Latin student's ability to solve the meaning of an unfamiliar Latin word varies in direct proportion to the number of related English words he knows.

Textbook writers and teachers in our elementary schools have for a good many years been conscious of the problem of vocabulary burden, and there is available for elementary school pupils a considerable number of English readers of low burden. More recently workers in the field of adult education have been writing or rewriting reading material with adult content but with a total vocabulary as low as 300 or 600 or 900 different words. In the reading of foreign language, the problem has been recognized, but only recently has it been seriously attacked. My daughter, an eighth-grade pupil, is now reading an abridged school edition of Malot's *Sans Famille* with a basic vocabulary of 357 words. The regular school edition of this same French story has a vocabulary of approximately 2500 words. Simplified readers of a similar character are now available for most of the modern languages.

For beginners in Latin there are at least three such readers, with a combined vocabulary of less than 600 words; these are Mima Maxey and Marjorie Fay's *A New Latin Primer*, Cornelia, and Carolus et Maria (University of Chicago Press, 1933).

Authoritative word-counts are of course the *sine qua non* for the setting up of satisfactory word lists at any given level in any given language. Back of each of the simplified editions mentioned above stands a laboriously prepared word list. The beginning of such lists in Latin was Gonzales Lodge's *Vocabulary of High School Latin*, Columbia University, 1907. More recently the official *Latin Word List* of the College Entrance Examination Board has become the guide of textbook and syllabus and test makers in the matter of the "required" vocabulary of the various levels of secondary-school Latin reading. No Latin textbook or reader, so far as I know, except the Maxey and Fay books referred to above, is based exclusively upon the commonly accepted vocabulary for the first-year level. The reason is apparent. It is extremely difficult within the limits of 600 Latin words to prepare reading material that will be either interesting or worth the reading. However, an examination of recently published first- and second-year Latin books will reveal the fact that textbook makers have been making a valiant effort, through the use of a fairly large amount of "made," simplified, or adapted Latin, to reduce the vocabulary burden of the reading material for the first three semesters, and that they have sought further to ease that burden for the reader through the use of lesson, page, or marginal vocabularies, through parenthetical or interlinear vocabulary aids, or through the generous use of footnotes.

Of course, any of the devices just named can be employed to lighten the vocabulary burden of the unmodified text of any classical author. Thirty years ago A. T. Walker used the page vocabulary device for a part of the text of his edition of Caesar's *Gallie War* (Scott-Foresman, 1907). However, Walker gave help only once for each word, namely on its first appearance in the book. Obviously he was too optimistic. Except for pupils with an unusual amount of mucilage in their brains this device is a hundred percent helpful only for words which appear once. It is true that these once-only words constitute no small part of the vocabulary burden of any reading selection taken from any Latin author. For example, in the first 29 chapters of the unmodified text of the *Gallie War*, 446 of the 899 different words (exclusive of proper nouns) occur but once. And, according to Lodge's count, 1347 (or 30%) of the 4650 different words appearing in the traditional standard course of Caesar, Cicero, and Vergil appear but once. An even higher percentage of once-only words exists in the traditional reading content of Caesar, or Cicero, or Vergil, if taken alone.

A more recent and more successful attempt to lighten the vocabulary burden of a classical author is Clyde Pharr's edition of the *Aeneid* (Heath, 1930), with a "visible vocabulary" which gives the meaning of every word on every page

except for a list of some 300 very commonly used words printed on an extensible sheet at the back of the book. Some such device for helping the pupil bear his vocabulary burden seems to me necessary if we expect him really to *read* the unmodified text of any classical author. Without such aid he can only slowly and painfully *decipher* or *decode*; so slowly that he is likely to lose interest in the story, and so painfully that he will feel justified in seeking help from sources other than those offered by the textbook. In reading the first 489 lines of Vergil's *Aeneid*, for example, the pupil will encounter 3358 running words and 1179 different words. This means a vocabulary *density* of approximately 1:3. Furthermore, of the 1179 different words, 669 are presumably unfamiliar to a fourth-year pupil. This means a vocabulary *burden* of 1:5. Thus after three years' faithful learning of "required" vocabulary the pupil still has to guess or be told the meaning of one word in every five. And even if he reads the whole first six books of the *Aeneid* he will on the average have to guess or be told the meaning of one word in every ten. I hasten to say that these figures are based on two assumptions, neither of which is likely to be entirely true: (1) that the pupil has learned in his three years' reading only the "required" words, and (2) that the pupil remembers all the "required" words and can recognize them in their varied inflectional forms and poetical meanings.

The only alternative I see to giving the pupil some form of vocabulary first aid in his reading of the unmodified text of Vergil or Cicero or Ovid or any other classical Latin author is to have the pupil first read a large amount of carefully graded "made" or adapted Latin and thus build up a large general reading vocabulary, or, at any rate, a large special vocabulary in preparation for the reading of each author. An attempt thus to prepare pupils to read Cicero's orations was made some twelve years ago by H. C. Nutting, who wrote a Latin story (*Ad Alpes*, Scott, Foresman, 1927) of about 130 Teubner pages with a vocabulary density of 1:12 and a vocabulary burden of only 1:15. So far as I know, no one has attempted to prepare reading material especially directed to building up functionally an adequate vocabulary for the reading of Vergil's *Aeneid*. The reading of all the traditionally read selections from Caesar and Cicero alone would not do it, even if the pupil should remember all of the approximately 3500 words he would meet there; for in *Aeneid* I-VI there are, exclusive of proper names, some 700 words which do not appear at all in the traditional readings from Caesar and Cicero. No more would the reading of even *Gallic War* I-V be an adequate vocabulary preparation for the reading of the traditional six orations of Cicero; for exclusive of proper names, 854 words found in these six orations do not appear in *Gallic War* I-V.

All that I have said above about lightening the vocabulary burden is based on the assumption that we want our students to *read* Latin and not merely to decipher it. It is also based on the fact that textbook makers in the modern languages are successfully meeting the demand for readable reading material at various levels. It is true that teachers of modern languages have certain natural advantages over teachers of Latin; they have a fairly adequate ready-made supply of reading material on the elementary level. However, their problem of preparing editions of their classics which can be really *read* by second- or third-year high-school students does not differ essentially from ours; and if they can and do solve their vocabulary problem, we can and must solve ours.

Efforts to solve the vocabulary problem in Latin through a simplification of text has so far been limited chiefly to Caesar. A few attempts have been made to rewrite so-called college authors for the schools, notably Livy, Terence, and Ovid. However, in none of these was the effort at simplification directed specifically at reducing the vocabulary burden. Furthermore, in the case of poets the metrical form of the original is usually frankly abandoned. Ovid or Vergil or Horace or

Catullus turned into prose is obviously not Ovid or Vergil or Horace or Catullus. The only practical way, it seems to me, in which we can reduce the vocabulary burden in the college authors is to find out which selections of which authors offer the lowest vocabulary burden, and then aid the pupil as much as we can in carrying the burden which even those selections impose.

With the first of these ideas in mind I recently undertook an analysis of the vocabulary burden of those selections commonly read by freshman Latin students who enter college with four years of Latin. An examination of the catalogues of 114 widely-distributed colleges showed that the following authors were most commonly read in the freshman year: Cicero (*De Senectute*) in 45 colleges; Horace (*Odes and Epodes*) in 36; Livy (mostly Books I, II, XXI, XXII) in 35; Terence (selected plays) in 23; Pliny (*Letters*) in 23; Cicero (*Letters*) in 21; Catullus (selections) in 19; Cicero (*De Amicitia*) in 16; Plautus (selected plays) in 14; Ovid (mostly *Metamorphoses*) in 14. (Other authors mentioned were Vergil [mostly *Eclogues*], Sallust, Martial, Tacitus, Lucretius, Propertius, Phaedrus, and Ennius.) I made an analysis of the vocabulary density and the vocabulary burden of approximately the first 9000 words in what appeared to be the commonly read selections from each of these authors. The results of this analysis are shown in the following table:

Selection	Running Words	Different Words	CEEB Words	Non-CEEB Words	Vocabulary Density	Vocabulary Burden
Cicero's Letters (Selections)	8942	1510	817	693	1:5.92	1:12.90
Cicero's De Amicitia (Complete)	9122	1484	741	743	1:6.15	1:12.28
Plautus' Menaechni (Complete)	8874	1476	703	773	1:6.01	1:11.48
Terence's Phormio (Complete)	8576	1454	695	759	1:5.90	1:11.30
Cicero's De Senectute (Complete)	8247	1568	773	795	1:5.26	1:10.39
Livy's Histories (I, 1-29)	8724	1788	926	862	1:4.32	1:10.12
Pliny's Letters (I, II, in part)	8877	1900	853	985	1:4.67	1:9.01
Ovid's Metamorphoses (I, II, in part)	8775	2136	1062	1074	1:4.11	1:8.17
Catullus' Poems (I-65, in part)	8721	2333	1018	1315	1:3.74	1:6.63
Horace's Odes (I, II, III, in part)	8259	2382	1084	1298	1:3.47	1:6.38

This table shows that of the ten sample passages studied, Cicero's Letters, with 8942 running words, exclusive of proper names, presents to the fifth-year Latin student the fourth lowest number of different words, the lowest number of non-College-Board words, the third lowest vocabulary density, and (what is of prime importance in this connection) the lowest vocabulary burden. The table also shows that of the ten sample passages studied, Cicero's *De Amicitia*, with its 9122 running words, exclusive of proper names, presents to the fifth-year student the third lowest number of different words, the next to the lowest number of non-College Board words, the lowest vocabulary density, and the next to the lowest vocabulary burden. The table also shows that on every point here being considered Cicero's *De Amicitia* would appear to be preferable to *De Senectute*, and yet *De Senectute* is read in three times as many colleges as is *De Amicitia*. It seems hardly possible that freshmen are supposed to be more interested in old age than in friendship! Perhaps the reason for the choice is the fact that *De Senectute* is about three Teubner pages shorter than *De Amicitia*.

In my own college days, Plautus and Terence were commonly read only by upper-classmen. Presumably our professors believed that Plautus and Terence were too difficult for freshmen. Considerable experience has convinced me that these authors are not too difficult for freshmen, and the laboratory analysis which I am here presenting shows why: that is, if the two plays analyzed are typical, as I believe they are. Plautus' *Menaechni* is second lowest in number of different words, fourth lowest in number of non-College-Board words, second lowest in vocabulary density, and third lowest in vocabulary burden. Terence's *Phormio* is lowest in the number of different words, third lowest in the number of non-Col-

lege-Board words, fourth lowest in vocabulary density, fourth lowest in vocabulary burden. A similar study of Plautus' *Mostellaria* showed 8559 running words, 1531 different words, 723 CEEB words, 808 non-CEEB words, a vocabulary density of 1:5.85, and a vocabulary burden of 1:11.09. A study of Terence's *Andria* showed 8074 running words, 1342 different words, 653 CEEB words, 689 non-CEEB words, a vocabulary density of 1:6.02, and a vocabulary burden of 1:11.71. No one who has tried reading Plautus or Terence with college students has any doubt about the interest which these plays evoke.

Our table shows that Livy, once all but universally read by college freshmen, stands fifth highest in vocabulary burden, while dear old Horace stands highest in vocabulary burden, and Catullus is not far behind. It would appear, therefore, that if we offer Horace's Odes or Catullus' poems to our college freshmen we must justify doing so on grounds other than the ease with which these selections can be read. As I have shown, many college teachers do offer Horace to freshmen, and a somewhat smaller number offer Catullus. Doubtless they feel justified in doing so because of the interest which these authors evoke and the important place which they fill in the history of lyric poetry. To any such teacher I can only repeat the suggestion made earlier in this paper, that he should give the pupil all the aid he can possibly give him to lighten the vocabulary burden thus imposed.

### THE VERSE-WRITING CONTEST— RESULTS

The Editorial Board announces with pleasure that four poems have been judged winners in the college division of the verse-writing contest, and five in the high school division. In addition, one other entry, "Julius Caesar," by Anna Lefferts, has been accorded honorable mention. The ten poems follow (the order is not significant).

#### COLLEGE DIVISION TO LIVY

By HELEN SKRINAR

*College of St. Francis, Joliet, Ill. (Sister M. Vincentia Broen, Latin Teacher)*

O eloquent historian of Rome,  
When the liquid, languid lute of Horace sang  
Of ease beneath the trees and wine's dark foam,  
While all the splendid purpled city rang  
With Caesar's praise, and Vergil's solemn voice  
Unloosed the wrath of Juno, spouse to Jove,  
Then spent itself on Venus' son, and choice  
Of Ovid's theme was turned to Cupid's grove:  
When all were heard with nod of gracious praise,  
You spent your ill-lit nights and sun-lit days  
In fashioning each vivid vital phrase.  
What matter if they say your narrative  
Lacks truth? This fault of genius I forgive  
That Hannibal in history might live.

#### TO LESBIA

By EUGENE DEMSKI

*Milwaukee (Wis.) State Teachers College (Miss Ortha L. Wilner, Latin Teacher)*

The room is swept and garnished and made sweet,  
But it is empty (and has ever been),  
Until you press the threshold with your feet,  
Until you deign to enter in.  
Think of me more, though I should merit less.  
Until you enter, I am emptiness.

### GRAECIAE EXCUBITOR

By J. HUDSON MITCHELL

*St. Isaac Jogues College, Wernersville, Pa. (Rev. John P. Carroll, S. J., Latin Teacher)*

(Note: The meter of this poem is the accentual iambic dimeter.)

Vitam dicavit patriae,  
Defensor primus gloriae  
Insomnis vigil Graeciae,  
Demosthenes.  
Cum spiritu mirabili  
Conatus est difficili  
Labore non ignobili  
Se fingere.  
Se iuvenis instituit,  
Laboribus exercuit,  
Vir optimus enituit  
Pro patria.  
O felix illud studium  
Quod tulit ad imperium  
Athenas, regem gentium  
Pellucidus!  
Ardenti fandi genere  
Verba cupivit fundere  
Ut cives suo munere  
Erigeret.  
Tyranni dolos detegens  
Et libertatem protegens  
Contendit, artes retegens  
Philippicas.  
Heros defendit patriam,  
Negavit fors victoriam,  
Sed tradidit memoriam  
Perpetuam.

#### DIANA

By BARBARA ANNE WHITE

*Bates College, Lewiston, Me. (Prof. Fred A. Knapp, Latin Teacher; Robert W. Cope, Collingswood, N. J., High School Latin Teacher)*

A hush clung to the forest floor  
And silence dripped from every limb;  
The moon slipped from her mountain door,  
And mourning, hung her lantern dim  
Upon her arm, a weeping light.  
Then crept she soft above the grove  
Where slipt upon its breast a sight  
In marble charm. She kissed her love—  
Her ruined realm—then onward sailed,  
Orion, Pleiades in her train,  
And with a cloudy film she veiled  
Her face. Lo! It began to rain.

### HIGH SCHOOL DIVISION

#### THE PREY IS GONE

By VIRGINIA VINCENT

*Saint Nicholas School for Girls, Seattle, Wash. (Miss Winifred Sinclair, Latin Teacher)*

From verdant slopes, an evil band,  
Cyclopes swarm across the land  
And line the shore.  
And towering Aetna, with her crown  
Of icy silver, rumbles down  
With loud and vibrant roar.

The poor, gaunt, filthy Grecian weeps,  
Groans, mumbles, as our vessel leaps  
Through waves with ease.  
And sightless Polyphemus shrieks  
And claws, and bestially wreaks  
His vengeance on the seas.

And all along that grim, dark mound,  
That noisome stretch of Cyclops' ground  
Amid the waves,  
And all around that rock-rent isle  
Which plodding, giant feet defile,  
And in the blood-wet caves,

The creatures curse and wail and cry,  
Shake horny fists to frowning sky  
And grey, unruly dawn—  
And from the slopes, bare, bent trees groan,  
Sad Aetna answers with a moan,  
"The prey is gone."

### DIDO IN HADES

BY DEBORAH BURSTEIN

*Hunter College High School, New York City (Miss Lillian  
Corrigan, Latin Teacher)*

I hear, but cannot quite believe. They say  
Aeneas comes to visit here below.  
He looks for welcome, but he will not stay;  
One moment will he linger, then away,  
As once before, a long, long time ago.

How eagerly his restless ships he manned!  
His self-renown forbade him to remain.  
He sailed in winter to an unknown land  
And left a sorrowing queen on Libya's strand;  
Nor did he heed her grief, her rage, her pain.

What chance had I to overcome such odds?  
A queen, I knelt, I pled; I could no more.  
Forever favored by the tyrant gods,  
He bent before the Olympians' haughty nods,  
And sped, untroubled, from my shelt'ring shore.

What need has he to seek his halting sire?  
His long-sought, vaunted kingdom lies above.  
My sorrows should have vanished on my pyre,  
And earthly sins been cleansed by funeral fire.  
Why comes he now to 'mind me of my love?

But yet he comes, where live men dare not tread.  
I love him still, but may not let him see.  
I will not speak; I will not turn my head.  
They lie who say that peace comes to the dead!  
Anon, Sychaeus, wait; I follow thee.

### THE WALLS OF TROY

BY ELEANOR EDWARDS

*Latrobe (Pa.) High School (Miss Adeline E. Reeping,  
Latin Teacher)*

How splendid is the Grecian might  
Outside the walls of Troy!  
The spearheads glitter in the light,  
The shining helmets blind the sight,  
Outside the walls of Troy.

See Menelaus, Sparta's king,  
Below the walls of Troy!  
Hear how his stern commandments ring.

For him, life is a meager thing,  
Below the walls of Troy.

The Trojans are a valiant host  
Within the walls of Troy,  
But they have heard a whispered boast  
That death stalks like a fettered ghost  
Within the walls of Troy.

They watch the white ships sail away  
As they stand on the walls of Troy.  
The galleys churn the troubled bay.  
"We shall be saved!" the people say,  
As they stand on the walls of Troy.

But when deep twilight spreads its gloom  
Above the walls of Troy,  
The ghost walks in his narrow room  
And in the sky writes words of doom,  
Above the walls of Troy.

\* \* \*

No house, no pillar marked the place  
Of the vanished walls of Troy.  
The Trojans?—A forgotten race.  
Three thousand years the world lost trace  
Of the vanished walls of Troy.

### VENUS IN THE FOREST

BY JANE THORNTON

*Western High School, Baltimore, Md. (Miss Margaret T.  
Englar, Latin Teacher)*

Where the darkening woods grow denser,  
Where the beaten path declines,  
Where the birds have ceased their music,  
Where the sun less splendid shines;  
She, the lovely, youthful huntress,  
She beyond mortality,  
Suddenly displays her godhood,  
Leaving earth's reality.  
As the roseate gleam reveals her,  
Scents divine drift everywhere;  
Lightly calls she to the breezes,  
Vanishing into the air.

### JULIUS CAESAR

BY ANNA LEFFERTS

*Abington Township (Pa.) Senior High School (Miss  
Catharine E. Lobach, Latin Teacher)*

Julius Caesar, pride of Rome,  
Made the battlefield his home;  
First he fought, and then he went  
And wrote about it in his tent.

Caesar conquered Rome and Gaul  
Belgium, Germany, and all;  
(Then, with very little fuss,  
He came, and saw, and conquered us!)

Laws he taught the Gauls to make,  
Roads to lay, and bricks to bake;  
Thus his foes, when they were beat,  
Benefited by defeat.

But the jealous Romans who  
Saw how Caesar's power grew  
Whispered, "Men who wax too great,  
Become a danger to the state."

One by one, they stabbed him through;  
 One by one, his blood they drew.  
 "Brutus, even thou?" he cried,  
 And Brutus struck, and Caesar died.

### CASSANDRA'S SONG

By EVELYN LEVOW

*Hunter College High School, New York City (Miss Lillian  
 Corrigan, Latin Teacher)*

The flames reveal the scene I long foretold . . .  
 A mass of raving Greeks who left the horse  
 To burn and plunder, slaying young and old,  
 Revenging endless siege with brutal force;  
 And even thou, Apollo, art not spared,  
 For at thy sacred steps the brave have died  
 Who would be living now if thou hadst cared  
 For human pain above thine own great pride.  
 I loved thee not, and so was doomed to hear  
 Men call me mad when I proclaimed the day  
 Of Grecian joy as Troy's grim end drew near.  
 My words were true, yet I have still to say,  
 The ancient race shall win though bruised and sore;  
 Troy falls, but soon shall rise to rule once more.

### WORDS, WORDS, WORDS

By GRAVES HAYDON THOMPSON

*Cumberland University, Lebanon, Tenn.*

(Condensed from a paper read before the Latin section of  
 the East Tennessee Teachers' Association at Knoxville,  
 October 28, 1938.)

Words—everybody uses them, women more than men, but  
 everybody sooner or later, except those unfortunate people  
 who because of some physical or mental handicap are de-  
 prived of the ability to articulate. Such people are described  
 as "dumb;" and by an extension of the idea, unfair to these  
 unfortunates, the same term "dumb" has been applied to  
 those persons not considered intellectually bright, and also  
 to blondes. So even a popular colloquialism has served to  
 show the relationship between mental solvency and the use  
 of words.

It has never been decided whether words are a means of  
 communicating thought or of concealing thought or of reveal-  
 ing the lack of thought. But, regardless of that, no one can  
 deny that they play a considerable part in the lives of all  
 of us. Talking movies, radios, churches, mothers-in-law—  
 all might as well not exist if words were taken from them.  
 It is a point which requires no elaboration.

But so common are these words of ours that the average  
 person seldom stops to think about them and their pasts,  
 just as we are completely unimpressed by the multitudinous  
 atoms of a subway crowd or the shoppers who jostle us on  
 the downtown streets during the Christmas rush. As a mass  
 of humanity, we are aware of and perhaps annoyed by their  
 propinquity, but singly they mean little or nothing to us,  
 unless one happens to step on our toe or to call us a name.  
 Yet how many individuals of those swarming masses, if we  
 could but delve into their private lives, would reward us  
 with stories as fascinating as those of Maupassant and  
 Balzac and O. Henry!

You see what I am getting at. Words are like that. We  
 meet them in swarms and droves, but give scarcely a thought  
 to where they come from, why they mean what they do,  
 what history lies behind them, and all that. Polonius asks  
 Hamlet, "What do you read, my lord?" and receives the  
 famous reply, "Words, words, words!" By the very mono-  
 tone of his reply Hamlet reduces those fascinating and  
 varied little combinations of letters to the same level and  
 deprives them of all personality. For words do have per-

sonality and individual existence just as people do, and close  
 acquaintance with them can afford much pleasure.

There are few of us who have escaped the hidden snares  
 and fascinating byways of the dictionary. We set out to look  
 up the spelling of some such word as *periesophageal*, but  
 every page which turns its face up to us as we make spas-  
 modic progress toward the *perie-* words offers some irre-  
 sistible nugget of intriguing and probably useless knowledge  
 to hold our eye and divert our thought to Australia and  
 its dingo or to the Dinka of the Nile or the African koodoo.  
 Definitely there can be fun with a dictionary.

One of the most astounding word adventures is set off  
 by that favorite of English and Latin teachers, *onomatopoeia*,  
 as discussed in Webster's *New International Dictionary*. We  
 read its definition: "1. Philol. a. Formation of words in  
 imitation of natural sounds," etc. Then, at the end, "See  
 Bowwow Theory." The invitation to go to the bowwows  
 is not to be resisted. Hastily we turn back to the B's and  
 read "Bowwow Theory of Language, the theory that lan-  
 guage originated in imitations of natural sounds, as those  
 of birds and dogs, of thunder, etc. Cf. Poohpooh Theory."  
 Off we go to the Poohpooh Theory: "The theory that  
 language originated in interjections which gradually acquired  
 objective meaning." Then we are invited to compare not  
 only our old friend, Bowwow Theory, but a new and re-  
 sounding one, the Dingdong Theory. This turns out to be  
 "the theory which maintains that the primitive elements of  
 language are reflex expressions induced by sensory impres-  
 sions," etc. We have reached the end of the trail, or rather  
 are ready to double back on ourselves, for next we are  
 instructed to compare Bowwow Theory, Poohpooh Theory.  
 And so, 'round and 'round we go, from Bowwow Theory  
 to Poohpooh Theory to Dingdong Theory to Bowwow  
 Theory and so on *ad infinitum*.

In my childhood I enjoyed many a chortle over confound-  
 ing my playmates with the riddle, "What is the longest word  
 in the English language?" The answer, of course, was  
*smiles*, "'cause there's a mile between the first and the last  
 letter." Today, in the presence of a more dignified company,  
 it would be necessary to reply, "Pneumonoultramicroscopic-  
 silicovolcanokoniosis." It means "a form of lung trouble  
 caused by volcanic ash in the air," and the word itself is  
 likely to give anyone who tries to pronounce it a form of  
 lung trouble. The definition is exactly as long as the word  
 itself. But even this Goliath is surpassed by that Brobding-  
 nagian creation of Aristophanes which holds the all-time  
 record. The word is "lopadotemachoselachogaleokraniol-  
 eip-sanodrimypotrimmatosilphiotyromelitokatakchymeno-  
 kichlepipikossyphattoperisteralektryonoptekephallio-  
 klopleleiolagoosiraiohaphetraganopterygon" (*Ecclesiastus*,  
 1169 ff.), and it means "hash." Aristophanes has simply taken  
 all the foods that he could think of and thrown them together  
 into one dish and one word. "Hash" is the obvious Ameri-  
 can translation for the result. Yet the word could easily be  
 analyzed into its component parts, and then we should have  
 something like this: "Oysters-saltfish-shark-sharks'-heads-  
 remnants - of - sour - dressing-lasertitium-cheese-with-honey-  
 poured - over - thrush - blackbird - wood-pigeon-dove-rooster-  
 roast - brains - wagtail - ring - dove-hare-dipped-in-new-wine-  
 gristle-wings."

Now, the thing to be noted is this: all long and formidable  
 words of the English language can be broken down into  
 smaller and simpler units, and if we know the meaning of  
 these units the meaning of the compound can usually be  
 discovered without difficulty. Take "pneumonoultramicroscopic-  
 silicovolcanokoniosis," for example. *Pneumono-* is obviously  
 akin to *pneumatic* and *pneumonia*; little brain effort is then  
 required to obtain the meaning of either "air" or "lung"  
 from it. *Ultramicroscopic-* requires no analysis, though it  
 can be broken up into three parts: *ultra-* meaning "beyond,"

*micro-* meaning "small," and *-scopic* meaning "pertaining to seeing," so that we have something too small to be seen through a microscope. *Silico-* is obvious, as is *-volcano-*; *-koni-* is the first really unfamiliar element, though it does appear in such words as *koniology* and *koniscope*. It turns out to be from the Greek word for "dust." The ending *-osis* is a Greek one often used to indicate a diseased condition, as in *tuberculosis*. Recapitulating, we find eight component parts, five Greek and three Latin, which, when put together, yield the meaning of this longest English word—literally, "lung - extremely-very-small-hard-rock-volcanic-dust-disease;" that is, "a form of lung trouble caused by volcanic ash in the air."

To speak to experienced Latin teachers concerning the debt of the language of Shakespeare and Franklin D. Roosevelt to that of Vergil and Clodius would be carrying owls to Athens. To produce the phrase "the romance of words" would hardly breathe the fresh air of originality. But it might not be amiss here to point out how some of our most dignified English words, if analyzed carefully, can be shown to come from very undignified, salty, and even slangy origins.

Suppose someone began a story thus: "Miss Pennypacker was perplexed. Ethelbert, though precocious, had always seemed polite enough. But one day she heard him insult little Cydippe and call her a fool. Mortified by his effrontery, she inveighed against such deportment. In fact, she excoriated him, saying he needn't look so supercilious, that he needn't think he could impose on her, that she had heard he was somewhat recalcitrant, and if he kept on, he would be utterly depraved. Ethelbert apprehended her meaning, but all he said was that she was delirious." Such writing leans over backward in its dignity.

But consider the same episode, related in this fashion: "Miss Pennypacker was balled up. Ethelbert, though half-baked, had always seemed smooth enough. But one day she heard him hop all over little Cydippe and call her a wind-bag. Killed by his cheek, she sailed into such carrying-on. In fact, she took the hide off him, saying he needn't look so high-brow, that he needn't think he could put it over on her, that she had heard he was somewhat of a kicker, and if he kept on he would be utterly crooked. Ethelbert caught on to her meaning, but all he said was that she was off her trolley." In this version, the racy expressions would seem to belong to an entirely different cultural level from those used in the former account. Yet, as you have doubtless observed, each slang phrase was a more or less exact etymological equivalent of the dignified sesquipedalian or semipedal word for which it was substituted. It was simply a matter of going back to the Latin word from which the English was derived, discovering what the Latin itself originally meant, and matching the picturesqueness of the Latin with its literal equivalent in American slang.

At symphony concerts we often see, not only those whose wives made them dress up and go, but even people who claim to be lovers of good music, sitting stiffly with solemn faces while the orchestra whirls through a lilting musical joke of Mozart or the titillating *Till Eulenspiegel* of Richard Strauss. They little realize that what is pouring into their ears, while it is great music, is *not* serious music. Humor, satire, good spirits, burlesque, are filling the air about them, and they don't know it. In the same way many of us sit complacently as the English language swirls all around. We are deaf to the real meanings, and blind to the real personalities of even familiar words. Worse than that, the ignorant poohpooh, and some of the learned fulminate against, the use of any word longer than two syllables, against recognized words which enrich the English language beyond measure, utterly missing their tangy salt and humor. Latin teachers can play a big part in meeting this situation.

## SOME REMARKS OF SENECA ON BOOK-BURNING

BY FRED A. SOCHATOFF

Arnold School, Pittsburgh, Pa.

A plea for tolerance having a current application is voiced by the Elder Seneca in his vehement attack on the burning of the writings of one Titus Labienus (*Controversiae* X, *Praefatio* 5-8). It is quite evident that Labienus was an obstreperous rhetorician whose excoriation of classes and individuals was so untamed that he was nicknamed "Rabienus." But obnoxious individual though he was, Seneca is concerned that, in the burning of all his writings through the machinations of enemies, a new device for vengeance was set up: namely, that punishment be inflicted on literary pursuits. He deems it a public blessing that such a penalty post-dated Cicero, for he shudders to think of the result if it had pleased the fancy of the triumvirs "to proscribe the intellect of Cicero." He experiences a feeling of grim satisfaction that the punishment of intellects had its inception at an age in which intellectual capacity had failed.

"What is this so great madness that stirs you, most foolish men? Since nature has withdrawn intellect and the memory of good reputation from suffering, you find a method whereby you may bring those, too, within the compass of corporeal woe. How great and insatiable cruelty it is to apply a torch to intellectual pursuits and to punish the memorials of studies!"

Seneca, who throughout his entire composition is seen to be sincerely devout, reflects that the gods are slow but positive avengers of mankind and that what one has thought out for another's punishment he himself often expiates by his own. As an actual fact, the man who read the sentence on the writings of Labienus lived to see his own writings burned; with no poor precedent, comments Seneca, since it was his own!

Two interesting sequels form a part of the discussion. Cassius Severus, an acrid foe of Labienus, stated wryly, but quite pointedly, that he, too, ought to be burned, for he had studied the books of his adversary. Labienus, his blatancy notwithstanding, had himself sealed within his ancestral tomb, obviously fearing that the fire which had been applied to his name might be denied to his person.

## SAN FRANCISCO MEETING OF THE AMERICAN CLASSICAL LEAGUE

In cooperation with the N.E.A., the American Classical League will hold its twenty-first annual meeting in San Francisco on July 3-5, 1939. The first session will be on Monday afternoon, July 3, in conjunction with the Department of Secondary Education. The general topic is "Correlation and Integration of High School Subjects." Among the speakers for the first session will be: Mignonette Spilman of the University of Utah, "Prerequisites for the Intelligent Use of English Dictionaries;" Dorothy Park Latta, Director of the American Classical League Service Bureau, "The Latin Department, a Source of Light;" Carol S. Wickert, University High School, Oakland, "The Social Studies Content of Caesar's *Gallie War*;" R. R. Chase, Principal of the Balboa High School, San Francisco, will preside.

The second session will be held on Wednesday, July 5, at 2 P.M., at the Hotel Stewart. The speakers will be: Raymond D. Harriman, Stanford University, "Quintilian Among the Moderns;" James McGiffert, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, "The Debt of a Mathematician to the Classics;" Gertrude Atherton, "Writing Novels with Classical Heroines;" William H. Alexander, University of California, "Oliver Twist Asks for More;" Caroline S. Woodruff, Past President of the N.E.A., Principal, State Normal School, Castleton, Vermont, "Classical Training Valuable for the Teacher of Any Subject;" Edward A. Wicher, San Francisco Theological Seminary, "Petra" (illustrated).

On Tuesday afternoon the members of the League will be the guests of the Classical Association of the Pacific States at a tea to be given on the campus of the University of California. A subscription dinner will be held in the Crystal Ball Room of the Western Women's Club at 6 o'clock on Wednesday, July 5, at which there will be short speeches by prominent guests and music by local artists. An efficient local committee, with Claire Thursby as chairman, is in charge of general arrangements.

The Hotel Stewart will be headquarters for the American Classical League. If members in asking for accommodations mention the League, they will receive special attention from the manager.—W.L.C.

## BOOK NOTES

Olympiad. By Albert I. Mayer, Jr. New York and London: Harper & Bros., 1938. Pp. 268. \$2.00.

A "historical" story centering around the Olympic games. Contains some breath-taking blunders, mostly misunderstandings of various phases of Greek life. Abounds in such atrocities as "On the fresco were beautifully-made statues;" "slender pillars unfluted and of Doric order;" "the older boys were using parchment papyrus rolls;" "in the year of the Olympiad 71;" "the Acropolis of Elis, the work of Phidias;" "the flute-player was playing a double flute with a mouth-piece on the side;" "strigila," etc. Some of the spellings provoke a shudder—Asclepioien, Kleonair, Rhodean, Milestus, Hrgives, Milo and Milos interchangeably, Herakles and Hercules interchangeably, Pelagisi, and so on and on. Some of the illustrations suggest a performance of the *Mikado* rather than a tale of ancient Greece. Still, the book is perhaps no more of an offender than the average hastily-written historical novel. The high-school boy will probably not be very critical, and will enjoy the athletic details of the story.—L.B.L.

Before Homer. By DeWolfe Morgan. New York and Toronto: Longmans, Green & Co., 1938. Pp. 261. \$2.00.

An attempt to recreate in story form the atmosphere of the period of the Hellenic migrations into Greece. Contains its quota of errors, introduces uniformly impossible names for its characters, and displays a pseudo-archaic diction which at times approaches the ludicrous; but it is fairly readable, and should make some appeal to adolescent boys.—L.B.L.

Pugnax the Gladiator. By Paul L. Anderson. New York and London: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1939. Pp. 296. \$2.00.

Mr. Anderson's historical stories have long been favorites among high school boys; and this new one, a stirring tale of a young Gallic prisoner sold into the life of the arena, will be seized upon with eager hands. It has, to be sure, a few incautious errors of fact, a few questionable names, and a few rather astounding coincidences in the plot; still it is an excellent story, and it furnishes a memorable "slave's-eye view" of the Rome of Caesar and Cicero.—L.B.L.

The Antigone of Sophocles. An English Version by Dudley Fitts and Robert Fitzgerald. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1939. Pp. 97. \$1.50.

A striking new version of the Antigone, largely in verse, but with a few passages rendered in prose. There is admittedly some deviation from the exact letter of the original. The English is singularly direct and idiomatic, yet profoundly dignified. The part of the sentry, and the choral ode to Bacchus seem particularly well rendered. The version looks as if it might be a very "actable" one. Incidentally, the authors, in their "Commentary," make a few suggestions for production, and even advocate the use of masks. It is

interesting to note that they hold the disputed theory that the Greek mask amplified the voice. The make-up of the book is sumptuous. The paper is good, the printing is fine, and such divisions as "Prologue," "Parodos," "Scene I," "Ode I," etc., are set off by blank pages.—L.B.L.

Doctoral Dissertations Accepted by American Universities 1937-1938. Edited by D. B. Gilchrist. New York: The H. W. Wilson Co., 1938. Pp. xiv+109. \$2.

The title of this work is almost self-explanatory. It is the fifth volume issued since 1933. There is a very helpful table which tells whether or not a dissertation in this volume may be obtained for study by loan or purchase. Also there is a convenient list of those universities which abstract their dissertations in periodicals. A useful volume for libraries.—D.P.L.

## A BINDER FOR SALE

The American Classical League Service Bureau sells for 50c postpaid an attractive loose-leaf binder for copies of THE CLASSICAL OUTLOOK. It is made of stiff green cloth, and bears the title in silver.

## NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The thirty-fifth annual meeting of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South was held at Oberlin College on April 6, 7, and 8. The program included papers, demonstrations, illustrated talks; reports of important committees; dramatizations from Herodas and Theocritus; modern dance interpretations of ancient themes; and numerous social events.

The Classical Association of the Atlantic States met on April 28 and 29 in Philadelphia. Sessions were held at the Benjamin Franklin Hotel and at the William Penn Charter School. An unusual feature of the dinner meeting on Friday evening was a discussion of "The Importance in Education of the Study of the Classics," with five college presidents participating.

The Classical Association of New England met at Connecticut College on March 31 and April 1, and enjoyed a program of papers, interspersed with social gatherings. New officers elected include Prof. Harry E. Burton, of Dartmouth College, President; Miss Sylvia Lee, of Winsor School, Boston, Vice-President; Prof. John W. Spaeth, Jr., of Wesleyan University, Secretary-Treasurer; and Miss Hattie M. Holt, of Cranston (R. I.) High School, Representative on the Council of the American Classical League.

Students of Prof. Mabel K. Whiteside, of Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Lynchburg, Va., will present Euripides' *Trojan Women* in Greek on May 13. Professor Whiteside is directing the play; music for the choruses has been composed by one of her former students. With this performance the college rounds out twenty-five years of dignified and beautiful Greek dramatizations—a proud record indeed.

A. Bruderhausen, 127 Winfred Ave., Yonkers, N. Y., announces that the price of his model of a Roman turret has been reduced from \$1.75 to \$1.50, and that of his model of a Roman camp from \$2.00 to \$1.50. Illustrated lists of material may be obtained free from Mr. Bruderhausen.

The University of Vermont offers each year to prospective freshmen who are not residents of Vermont five scholarships of two hundred dollars each in Greek and Latin. Applicants must have completed four years of secondary school Latin with honor grades, and will be expected to take courses in Greek and Latin in college. A student will have his scholarship renewed for succeeding years if he maintains a high standing in college and continues his study of the

classics. Further information may be obtained from Prof. L. M. Prindle, 380 Maple St., Burlington, Vermont. Such tangible encouragement to good Latin students might well be undertaken by other colleges in the country.

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DOROTHY PARK LATTI, *Director*

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